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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, OREP(RYAN, LEO) GY
SUBJECT: OFFICIAL GOG STATEMENT ON THE ASSASSINATION OF CONGRESSMAN RYAN AND THE TRAGEDY AT JONESTOWN.

1. AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 24 DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PTOLEMY REID PRESENTED A STATEMENT ON THE MURDER OF CONGRESSMAN RYAN AT PPT KAITUMA AND THE SUBSEQUENT MASS MURDER/SUICIDE AT JONESTOWN. REID'S STATEMENT WAS COMPARATIVELY BRIEF AND FOLLOWING ITS CONCLUSION PARLIAMENT MOVED ON TO OTHER BUSINESS. UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THERE WILL POSSIBLY BE A LATER DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT AT WHICH TIME THE OPPOSITION WILL BE ABLE TO QUESTION THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE IN HANDLING THE TWO INCIDENTS.

2. REID'S STATEMENT WAS IN MOST RESPECTS A STRAIGHT-FORWARD RECITAL OF THE EVENTS OF SATURDAY AS ALREADY APPEARED IN OUR REPORTING CABLES AND PRESS ACCOUNTS. HE DID USE THE NEW NUMBERS ON TOTAL DEAD WHICH HAD BECOME KNOWN FRIDAY MORNING, WHICH AMBASSADOR HAD CONVEYED TO FOREIGN MINISTER JACKSON (PRINCIPAL DRAFTER OF REID'S STATEMENT) JUST AFTER NOON. REID STATED THAT GUYANESE SECURITY FORCES WHEN FIRST ENTERING JONESTOWN ON

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SUNDAY HAD DISCOVERED 323 BODIES AND THE TOLL "SUBSEQUENTLY HAS RISEN TO 775 AND POSSIBLY MORE." LATER IN HIS SPEECH, THE DEPUTY PRIMEMINISTER ANNOUNCED THAT ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA RECORDS THE PEOPLES TEMPLE POPULATION IN GUYANA WAS 915 PERSONS.

3. IN SPEAKING OF THE U.S. ROLE IN ASSISTING WITH THE JONESTOWN DISASTER, REID SAID THAT THE U.S. AND THE GOG HAD AGREED, AS SOON AS THE DIMENSIONS OF THE TRAGEDY HAD BEEN MADE MANIFEST, ON AREAS OF COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION. HE EXPLAINED THE DECISION TO REPATRIATE THE REMAINS BY SAYING THAT THE GOG WISHED TO SPARE THE NEXT-OF-KIN THE LONG AND EXPENSIVE TRIP TO GUYANA, AND, FURTHERMORE, THE U.S. HAD THE TECHNICAL MEANS TO POSITIVELY IDENTIFY REMAINS ABOVE AND BEYOND THE 193 WHICH THE GUYANA POLICE HAD BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY.

4. IN THE CASE OF THE DEATH OF SHARON AMOS AND HER

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THREE CHILDREN, REID IMPLIED THAT THE CHARGE OF MURDER WOULD SOON BE BROUGHT AGAINST A PRIME SUSPECT, WHOM HE DID NOT IDENTIFY.

5. IN EXPLAINING HOW THE PEOPLES TEMPLE HAD COME TO GUYANA, REID SAID THAT THE GROUP HAD BEEN INTRODUCED BY A FORMER GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA HONORARY CONSUL IN LOS ANGELES. BECAUSE OF THE GROUP'S INTERESTS WHICH SEEMED TO BE IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE AND SOCIAL SERVICE, A DECISION WAS MADE TO LEASE TO PEOPLES TEMPLE 3,000 ACRES IN THE NORTHWEST DISTRICT.

6. OTHER ITEMS COVERED IN THE SPEECH WERE:

(A) THE POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION OF JAMES JONES HAS

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BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE US GOVERNMENT.

(B) FOUR (4) LICENSES FOR FIREARMS HAD BEEN ISSUED TO RESIDENTS OF JONESTOWN. (SINCE THE INCIDENT REID ADMITTED IT HAD COME TO LIGHT THAT THERE WERE OTHER UNREGISTERED ARMS IN JONESTOWN, BUT HE OBSERVED THAT "THE CULPRITS ARE PROBABLY BEYOND OUR REACH.")

(C) THERE WAS THE PROMISE THAT FURTHER FORMAL CHARGES AGAINST INDIVIDUALS IN CONNECTION WITH THESE INCIDENTS WOULD BE MADE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

(D) REID EXPRESSED THE SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF GUYANA TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND PARTICULARLY TO THE FAMILY OF CONGRESSMAN RYAN.

7. COMMENT: REID'S REMARKS SHOWED EVIDENCE OF HASTY PREPARATION AND PROBABLY HASTY REWORKING IN LIGHT OF THE NEW NUMBERS ON TOTAL CASUALTIES WHICH BECAME AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 24. IN ANY EVENT IN VIEW OF THE TIMING OF HIS STATEMENT LATEST FIGURES WERE AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS BOTH IN GEORGETOWN AND WASHINGTON ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY. THE SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WAS ATTENDED BY MOST OF THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS NOW IN GEORGETOWN.

BURKE

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